

*Instructor's*  
***Do's & Don'ts***



**ASSESSOR EDUCATION**

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## How to Relate to Your Audience

*Teaching an assessor education program can be a rewarding professional experience if you approach it with the right attitude and adequate preparation. Here are some hard-earned insights suggested by some of your peers.*

**Be Yourself.** Relax and make the most of this opportunity to share your expertise with people with the same professional interests you have. One easy way to break the ice is by asking your students to introduce themselves or if the crowd is large, take an informal survey of the participants.

***Don't*** undercut your credibility by apologizing for your lack of speaking experience. Every assessor has been in a similar situation, so they know the drill.

**Be Prepared.** Outline the points you want to cover and consider alternative ways to present the information. For example, some people like to use personal anecdotes to illustrate a point. Practice and decide what works for you. Remember that education programs must meet established guidelines for both content and length. It's up to you, as instructor, to ensure that both criteria are met.

***Don't*** expect everything to go as scripted—it seldom does. Sometimes a question may force you to spend more time on a given topic than you planned. Prepare for this by building flexibility into your outline. Watch the clock and keep your presentation flowing from one topic to the next. Subparts of your outline can be covered in detail, summarized or skipped as circumstance demand.

**Get the Students Involved.** Create an interactive teaching experience. By soliciting comments or questions from the audience you can determine if you are on track with your message. Remember that students often learn from the experiences of other students.

***Don't*** allow yourself or your students to use the classroom as a forum for complaints. The focus is on sharing information and teaching. If a problem arises, be diplomatic but firm (“we can talk about that after class, in the meantime let's move on to...”).

**Be Honest About What You Don't Know.** Sooner or later, someone is bound to ask a question you can't answer.

***Don't*** be afraid to say: “I don't know the answer. I'll have to find out and get back to you. Are the rest of you interested in an answer to that question as well?” Make a note to yourself and follow up as quickly as possible.

## What to Show Them

*Handouts and well-designed visuals enhance the learning experience. Here are some tips on how to prepare effective visual materials.*

**Distribute Copies of the Program.** Copies of statutes, summaries of recent court decisions and even newspaper clippings can help students retain key information. Identify your handouts for easy reference.

***Don't*** read from your handouts or get bogged down by them. Remember that it's difficult and distracting for a student to be fumbling through papers trying to find a reference.

**Use Overhead Projections, PowerPoint, Slides, or Videotaped Materials That Help Cover the Key Topics Covered in the Program.**

***Don't*** use so many visuals that your students can't absorb them or relate them to the verbal message.

**Ensure Your Visuals Can Be Seen.** Your visuals must correspond to the characteristics of the room as well as the size of the audience.

***Don't*** project a typewritten spreadsheet or table onto a screen. Students won't be able to read it. It leads to frustration and dissatisfaction with the instructor, program and sponsor.

**Think About the Visual Message.** The visual should be thought of as your "headline" and your verbal message as the "story."

***Don't*** miss the central points. Convey them as clearly and concisely as possible. A good rule of thumb is no more than four points on a visual and no more than eight lines of text.

**Organize Your Visual Materials Carefully.** They should use the same terms as your verbal remarks and they should be numbered. Two good uses of visuals are at the beginning to outline what will be covered and at the end to summarize what has been covered.

***Don't*** treat visual elements as an afterthought. Develop them along with your course outline to reinforce key points or to clarify an issue.

**Use Pictures and Graphics Only If They Really Help Make A Point.**

***Don't*** use pictures or graphics just for the purpose of using pictures or graphics.

# HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Know your audience. Understand who they are, why they are at your presentation and what they want to know.**
2. **Develop clear visuals and manage the presentation.**

## VISUAL INFORMATION

- ✓ **DO NOT USE TYPEWRITTEN FONTS**
- ✓ **USE LARGE PRINT WITH 4-5 LINES ON A PAGE**
- ✓ **FILL IN THE AVAILABLE SPACE**
- ✓ **SPEAK FROM THE POINTS ON THE SLIDE**

3. **Remember that YOU are the message!**

**Please let us know if we can be helpful in making your continuing assessor education presentation a success.**

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